

Council President Lightner
City Administration Building
202 C Street, MS#10A
San Diego, CA 92101

January 26, 2015

Dear Councilmember Lightner,

I am writing in hopes of introducing you to the Museum School, a high-performing, tuition-free, public charter school that serves students from all over San Diego in Kindergarten through 8th grade. I am also writing in hopes of getting a chance to meet with you to discuss the possibilities of how your Charter Review Committee might, with one small change to our City's governing document, expand access for education in Balboa Park.

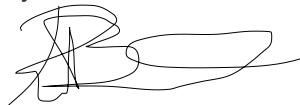
The Museum School offers a robust and diverse curriculum that encourages students to become independent thinkers; self-directed learners; problem solvers; creative, healthy individuals; productive workers; and responsible citizens! With a focus on active learning experiences, our students engage in their studies through projects, study trips and arts-based programming that enhances the rigorous core curriculum of Math, Science and Language Arts. We are especially proud to be able to offer this diverse curriculum at a time in education when so many of these experiences are considered extracurricular—and have been cut from traditional public schools.

In addition, since its inception in 1998, the Museum School has worked closely with museums, businesses and educational institutions to expand learning opportunities for all of our students. In doing so, our students' educations extend well beyond the classroom, opening doors to new ideas and extensive opportunities. Utilizing museum galleries, zoo exhibits, and restaurant kitchens as temporary classrooms, our students gain an insight not available in any text book, making connections that are relevant and readily accessible.

In particular, our students and teachers utilize the wealth of resources found in Balboa Park, a short walk from our school in Banker's Hill. Our school has outgrown our current site and we are exploring the possibility of re-locating all or some of our students to another site in close proximity to the park. We have the very real possibility of some significant funding available to make this occur within the next year or two. As part of our exploration, we have considered the possibility of actually locating within the park itself. Currently, the city's charter limits Balboa Park to 'park, recreation or cemetery purposes'. I believe that our park can, and does, offer much more than that. Museums already have educational components built in to them, camps and classes are offered throughout the park. With the current review of the city charter, there is a possibility for a small change that could open up a big idea.

Imagine a possible educational complex located on the outskirts of the park that could serve not only the Museum School, but also other organizations already located in the park. A site that could serve public school students during school days, and the community at night, weekends and during school breaks. I think a City-school partnership of this kind could also help alleviate some of the deferred maintenance needs and revitalize some of the buildings in Balboa Park at a time when I know the City is working to address infrastructure challenges. With the potential funding behind us to support this idea, I would like to meet with you to explore it with you. While it is still just an idea, I truly believe there is a magnificent opportunity that could become a true asset for our city.

Sincerely,



Phil Beaumont
Executive Director, Museum School



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February 20, 2015

Ms. Sherri Lightner, Chair, Charter Review Committee
San Diego City Council
City Administration Building
202 "C" Street
San Diego, Ca 92101

Subject: Charter Section 55

Dear Ms. Lightner:

The Protect Our Communities foundation urges the Charter Review Committee to propose no changes to Charter Section 55 that in any way weaken the current protection of dedicated City park land from commercial and other exploitation.

As you know, Charter Section 55 stipulates that dedicated City park land "shall not be used for any but park [or] recreation... purposes." This language is clearly intended to preserve such publically owned and intentionally preserved land from development and commercial use.

Despite this clear intent and protection in our Charter, this City Council has allowed systematic leasing of our citizen's dedicated park land to private corporations for uses such as wireless communication facilities. For instance, Adams Ave., Balboa, Carmel Valley, Mission Trails and Oak Park along with many other city parks have been used to allow commercial cell towers in their midst, a clear abridgement of the City Charter.

Both our City Charter and common sense tells us that our parks should be for recreation, not for rent. We ask the Council not to further disregard the expressed intent of Charter Section 55 and the people of San Diego. We urge you not to propose or support any change to Charter Section 55 that would in any way suggest, endorse, or permit any commercial or other non-recreational use of our City park land.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely yours,


Denis Trafecant
President

cc: Councilmember Chris Cate
Councilmember Mark Kersey
Councilmember Marti Emerald
Councilmember Lorie Zapf
Councilmember Todd Gloria
Councilmember Myrtle Cole
Councilmember Scott Sherman
Hon. Kevin Faulconer
Mr. Steve Hadley